

A  
SERMON  
AGAINST  
Murmuring:  
PREACHED in the  
Cathedral Church  
Of St. PETER  
EXON,

On the XXIX<sup>th</sup> of May, 1680.

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By THOMAS LONG, B. D. One of the Pre-  
bendaries of that Church.

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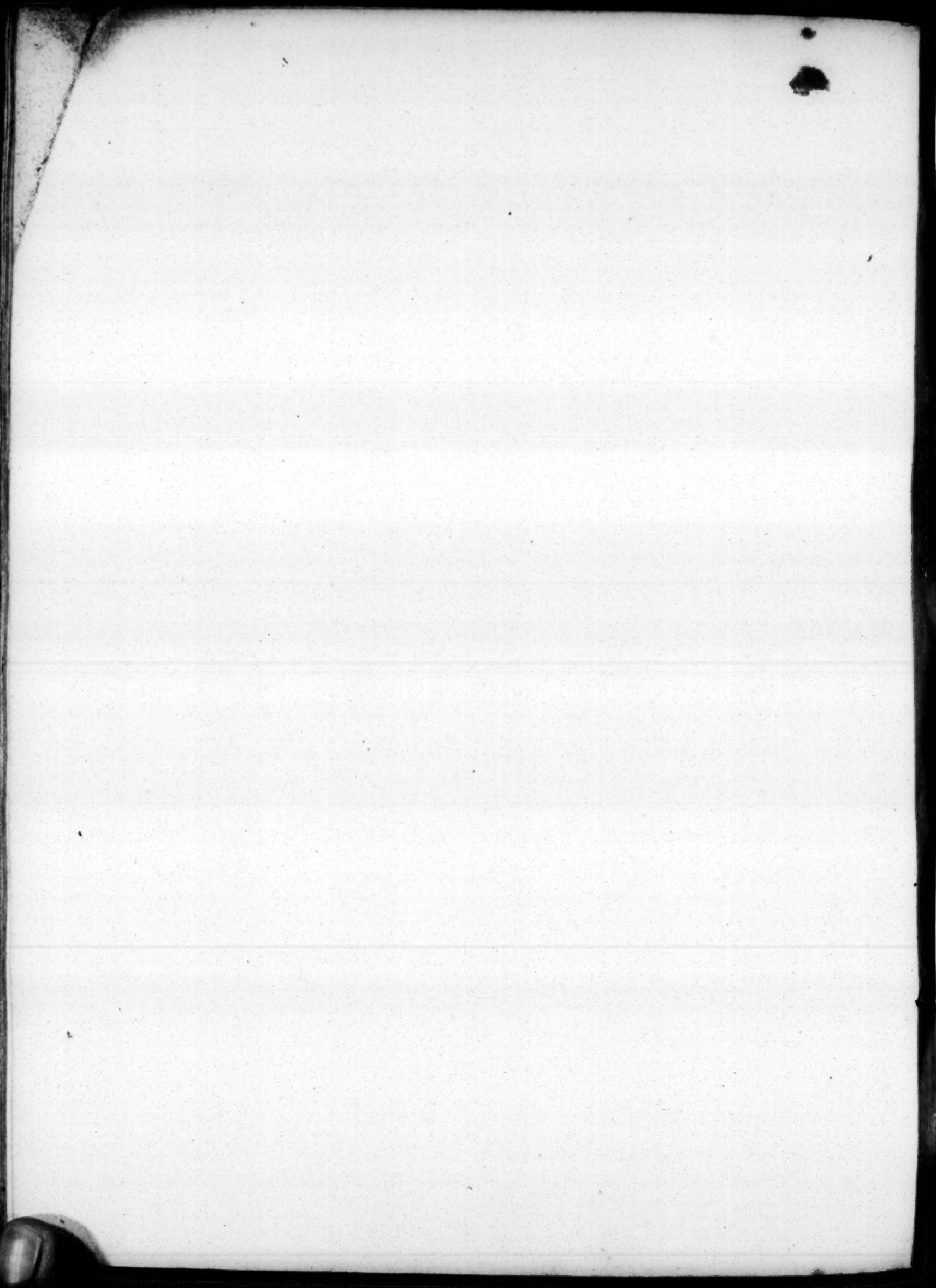
Exod. xvi. 8.

Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.

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TO THE  
Right Reverend FATHER in GOD  
**T H O M A S**  
LORD Bishop of  
**E X E T E R:**

**T**HIS Sermon not reaching the ears of those for whom it was chiefly intended, I have by your Lordships direction offered it to their hands, that it may be as a Glass not only to shew them their distorted faces but infectious breaths, which may fix some spots on the glass it self, but such as (I doubt not) will be easily wiped off. I have attempted a very difficult work, The governing of an unruly evil, for as St. James sayes, every kind of beasts Chap. 3.7. and serpents have been tamed by man, except the Serpent that is within him, the Tongue, which no man can tame. It was made to be our Glory, but we generally turn it to our shame, especially while therewith we seem to bless God, but curse and speak evil of those who bear most of his Image, his Magistrates and Ministers, v. 9. It is

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full of deadly poyon, such as never hurts less than three at once, the person slandered in his good name, by Calumny; the person that listeneth to him, in his Charity, by Prejudice and evil surmises; and himself most of all, by doing the Devils work in slandering his breihren, v. 8. It is a Fire, saith St. James, v. 6. and the worst of fires, for it is set on fire of hell; (i. e.) the Devil the father of lyes; He is that god of Contention who employs these Boutefeas as Mars did his Priests to scatter coals of fire in the Temple and inflame the whole course of Nature. Other evils may be seen and avoided, but this shoots out arrows that fly as invisibly in the day as in the dark; it is of such a Versatile and Proteus-like nature, that no knot can hold it, but it defies the Laws of God and man. Our tongues are our own, we ought to speak, who is Lord over us? Psal. 12.

Chap. 3.  
14.

I should not have enlarged this discourse but that I perceive Calumny is become the malus genius of the Nation, which seems to be possessed not with a dumb but a talkative spirit, that hath turned Religion into lying and slandering. And such mens Religion, St. James assures us, is vain, ch. 1.26. 'Tis like that wherewith the Votaries of Mercury did worship him by casting stones at his Image and murdering their brethren in Effigie. Our Apostle discovers the root of this evil to be a bitter zeal, or envying and strife in the heart: the blistering of the tongue is caused by an ulcerous heart; and 'tis from within out of

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the heart that all these impurities do proceed.. Wherefore according to our Saviours method, I have endeavoured to cleanse first that which is within, and to suppress the first motions of murmuring and discontent, by applying the lenitives of Right reason and Christian Religion which teacheth us to be of a meek and calm, a cool and quiet Spirit, to do our own businesß, and be content with such things as we have, and not to quarrel at the providences of God and the Administration of publick affairs.

But now men are grown presumptuous, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities and things which they understand not, 2 Pet. 2. 10. They are not afraid to insinuate as if the King favoured the Plot, which hath been declared to be against His Majesties person, and the Established Religion. They quarrel the Succession, and would put by the true and undoubted Heir. They insinuate that His Majesty is no friend to Parliaments, and would Rule us by an Arbitrary power. And as to the Church of England, they accuse it for declining apace to Popery, and approving Popish, Socinian and Pelagian Doctrines, as Lewes du Moulin, and the Author of the Celeusma; when it is confessed by foreign Divines, that it is the greatest fence against those pernicious errors. They talk as if the Church Governours were mere Thorns, and the instruments of the Devil, exercising Tyranny and Oppression, whereas the termes of Conformity as to the people,

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people, are confessed to be much more facile, than ever they were since the first Reformation. And in truth the Indulgence granted to such men hath destroyed more by 1000 to one, than that which they call persecution ( i. e. ) the execution of good laws. They tell the people of an utter impossibility of Conforming to the Church of England, because of many heinous sins in that Conformity, ( Baxter's Plea for peace, ) and that the Conformists are generally guilty of Perjury. And these baits are dispersed through the Nation, and greedily swallowed by the Credulous people who consider not what deadly hooks are under them. And how great a matter a little of such wild fire kindleth ! Against these false suggestions and dangerous murmurings, the ensuing discourse is intended.

The Persians were wont to observe an Anniversary Festival which they called the death of Vices ; and as an Embleme thereof, they destroyed as many Serpents as they found in the Land. I could not devise how to celebrate this happy Festival better than by endeavouring the mortification of those murmuring and discontented vices which were the cause of our former troubles, and reduced us to so low a condition, that none but Gods own hand could deliver us, as with all thankfulness we acknowledge. But as Ezra says, ch. 9. 13. If after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, for which God hath punished us less than we deserve,

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serve, and hath given us such deliverance as this, we should again break his Commandments, and neither fear him for his Judgments, nor obey him for his Clemency, but continue to be as our Fathers were, a murmuring and rebellious generation, may not our God be justly angry with us, till he have consummed us so that there be no remnant nor escaping? May we not fear that he will deal with us as he did with the murmuring Israelites, who for forty years together under the various and miraculous dispensations of mercies and judgments so grieved his Holy Spirit that he Swore in his wrath they should never into his rest? Psal. 95. Our sins have really brought us to that brink of destruction which our guilty fears make us to apprehend with horror, and yet we strive with all our might to cast each other into that gulf which like an open Sepulchre is prepared to swallow us all. Archimedes is said to have invented such an Engine, as if he could have found where to fix it, he would have undertaken by it to remove the Globe of the Earth out of its place. This Engine some Mathematicians suppose to have been a Screw; which lost invention, some of our Age have recovered. And if male-contented spirits be permitted to insinuate to the hearts of the credulous people, their fears and jealousies, their lyes and slanders, their murmurings and discontent, they would in a short time remove the well Established Foundations of Church and State.

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The God of Peace, Unity and Concord who stilleth the  
raging of the Sea, allay the madnesſ of such people.  
“ And give us all that peace which the world cannot  
“ give; that our hearts may be set to obey his Com-  
“ mandments, and also that by him we being defended  
“ from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in  
“ rest and quietnesſ, through the merits of Jesus Christ our  
“ Saviour.

So daily prayeth

Your Lordships most Humble  
and Obliged Servant,

THO. LONG.

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# SERMON

AGAINST

# Murmuring.

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Ecclesiastes vii. 10.

*Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.*

**T**H E R E is nothing wanting to complete the Solemnity of this Day, or indeed the happiness of the Whole Nation, besides Thankful and Obedient hearts to God and the King, for the many incomparable blessings which under them we now enjoy. That character which the Royal Prophet gives, *Psal. 144.* of a *blessed people*, agrees well with us: for first, (which is the foundation of all) we have the *Lord to be our God*, v. last. And our God hath given *Salvation to our King*, ver. 10. He hath delivered David his Servant from the peril of the Sword. And again, he hath delivered him

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him from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh of vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood. And now our Sons grow up as young plants, and our daughters are as the polished corners of the Temple, our Garners are full, affording all manner of store; our Sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets. There is no decay (of Trade) no leading into Captivity. Only we cannot say, there is no complaining in our streets. This sin lyeth as an indeleble reproach upon our Nation. We English-men never know when we are well. But what shall we say? when the most prosperous reign of Peaceable Solomon was disturbed with the Murmurings of Male-contents, it is no wonder if it be so with us. Every ear is filled with the hissing of such Serpents, and the noise which they make among the Thickets of the people; but it will require the wisdom of Solomon to charm them; and he did it so effectually, that though they did some time hiss at him, yet they could never hurt him, for there was peace all the days of Solomon. And that it may be so with us, I shall follow the method prescribed in the Text, where,

First, We have a Royal Prohibition, *Ne dicas, say not thou.*

Secondly, We have the sin described against which the Prohibition lyeth, which by consent of the best Expositors is a murmuring and repining at the present Dispensations of God, and the Administration of Publick affairs by our Governors.

Thirdly, We have the secret and subtle pretences by which it insinuates it self to the hearts of the people, *What is the cause?* and a false and odious comparison between the former and the present times, *The former times were better than these.*

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And Fourthly, The folly and impiety of such secret  
and mischievous Arts, *Thou dost not inquire wisely con-*  
*cerning this.*

First, Of the Royal Prohibition, *Say not thou*, that is,  
Though you question the King's Prerogative, yet quar-  
rel not with the Prerogative of God by whom Kings  
Reign and Princes decree judgment; as if he did not set  
fit Governours over us, or did not still retain a power  
over them, who hath the hearts of all Kings in his hands,  
and disposeth of them to his own wise and gracious ends  
either for the punishment or prosperity of a Nation: If  
the former days were better, it was God's will to have  
them so; and the present are not so bad, but we by our  
ingratitude deserve to have them worse: If we will not  
submit to *Solomons* rod, God may send a *Rehoboam*  
to chastise us with Scorpions. Know therefore that this  
sin doth not terminate in the persons or government  
of our Princes, but invades the Throne of God; as *Moses*  
told the *Israelites*, *your murmuring is not against us, but*  
*against the Lord.* And therefore *Solomon* strikes a blow  
at the root of this sin, the *ne dicas* is *ne dicas corde*, ad-  
mit not a discontented thought: for as where the Ser-  
pent gets in his head, he easily skrews in his whole bo-  
dy, so where the heart is sowned with a little of this  
Leaven, it ferments and envenometh the whole man,  
infects the neighbourhood and troubleth the whole Na-  
tion. *Solomon* expounds the *ne dicas* in the Text, by *ne*  
*maledicas*, ch. 10.20. for to murmur is *secretò maledicere*;   
and we are not to speak evil of the Rulers of the people  
*ne in Conscientia*, not under a pretence of Conscience;  
because we must submit for Conscience-sake; we may  
not do it *in scientia*, not speak the evil we know by them.  
It is not fit to say to a King *Thou art wicked*. Much less *Job 34.18.*

maist

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maist thou do it *in conclavibus* among thy Confidants, in private meetings. It is probably conjectured that *Solomon* had respect to *Jeroboam* and his confederates, <sup>1 Kings</sup> 12. 26. *Dixit corde, He said in his heart, now shall the kingdom return to the house of David.* He had learnt by *Shimei's* punishment not to rail or conspire openly against the King, but contrived secretly; for though it be said that he lift up his hand against the King, it was not in open rebellion, for there was no war in *Solomon's* days; but the phrase signifyeth, *juramento se obligavit*, he and his confederates entred into a Covenant against the King, the mischievous effects whereof though they were supprest by the wisdom of *Solomon* all his days, yet they brake out in the days of his Successor, and they complain even of *Solomon* himself, *Thy Father made our yoke grievous*, <sup>1 Kings</sup> 12. 4. Now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter; And yet we read not of any contribution except for the building of Gods house, or the necessary support of his own, to both which the people for the most part offered willingly. Nevertheless this gracious and peaceable Prince had many enemies who hated him, as *Davids* enemies did without a cause. They acknowledged that God as well as his father designed him for the Crown, and settled it on his head against all opposition, for *Adonijah* usurped the kingdom, *Abiathar*, *Foab* and *shimei* abetted the Usurpation, and were all defeated. God appearing for *Solomon* not once or twice for the preservation of him from such enemies, was a daily miracle. But *Jeroboam*, *solomons* servant whom he had preferred and greatly honoured, was his most dangerous and implacable enemy who filled the peoples hearts with fears and jealousies, and their mouths with complaints of his Government; and very industrious he was to find out some

<sup>1 Kings</sup> 2.  
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some real cause for his complaints, but finding none, he could only keep the people alarmed with the seditious Queries in the Text, *what is the cause?*

This being the Sin forbidden in the Text I shall aggravate it, 1. From the Causes, 2. From the Effects of it.

1. The Cause in general is the *lusts of men*. So S. Jude describes *Murmurers* to be such as *walk after their own lusts*, ver. 16. For when men are resolved to enjoy their lusts, they will indure no restraint from God or man, because their laws never so easie or equal: every one of them hath the mind of an Emperor, to live above the Laws themselves, and to make their will a Law to others. And hence it is that they would heap up Governours to themselves as they heap up Teachers, or rather usurp both those Offices to themselves, that it might be with them as when there was no King in *Israel*, every one might do what seemeth good in his own eyes. S. Jude v. 16. calls them *μεμφισοις*, complainers of their present condition, as too narrow and uneasie for their great Souls, which they think fit and able Intelligences to inform the highest orbs of Magistracy and Ministry.

2. Aristotle says it proceeds from self-love, and a fond conceit of our own parts and merits, for no man thinks too highly of himself but he thinks too meanly of others. *I am not as other men*, says the Pharisee, *nor as this Publican*. Some respect such a person is content to allow the Worthies of former ages, who are removed out of his way, and cannot rival him in his designs..

*Sed nisi quæ terris semota suisque  
Temporibus defuncta videt, fastidit & odit.*

If virtue it self were incarnate among such, they would look on her with an evil eye. The Pharisees seemed much affected with the Sufferings of the ancient Prophets, when at the same time they persecuted the Son of God by

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by whom they were all inspired. So the Poetafters in *Virgils* age, publickly read the harsh Poems of *Ennius*, despising him whom all ages since have deservedly admired. And on this account *Jeroboam* and the Malecontents in his days magnified themselves as if they were those Lilies of the field, to one of which *Solomon* in all his glory was not to be compared. There is scarce a Potsher'd though newly taken from the earth, though empty and crazy, but if it be not presently gilded over and made a vessel of honour, is ready to expostulate with the Potter, why hast thou made me thus?

3. This humor proceeds not only from a mans suppos'd worth, but from his real weakness. It is *impotencia spiritus*, the want of power to govern our own spirits that makes us impatient of the government of others. The shallowest rivers run with the greatest noise. And in all nature the weakest things are most querulous and ungovernable. Children will be foward, as well full as fasting; the weakness of their reason and judgment makes their desires and passions so extravagant and impetuous. The Olive and the Vine can content themselves with their own fatness, and the good man is satisfied from himself. As *Cincinnatus* and the worthies of old *Rome*, who could command as Generals in the Camp, and advise as Oracles in the Senate; and when their Countrey was safe, return again to their little Cottages and the Plough. It is the spiny bramble that is alway aspiring and in perpetual motion until it kindle a fire to consume it self and the Cedars in *Lebanon*, *Judges 9. 15.*

4. Another ingredient is guiltiness, which always makes men jealous and suspicious, especially of such as are in Authority. And as guilt causeth fear, so fear produceth hatred of those whom they have offended ( i.e. ) the Legislators, whom not being able to oppose by force, they

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they seek to undermine by fraud and secret practices : As some malefactors that are pursued joyn themselves to the pursuers, and by false suggestions and subtle insinuations raise suspicion on others to clear themselves. The most guilty are most clamorous and complain first, and feign themselves most diligent against the evils of the times, which they themselves have caused and continued. What is the Cause, say they, of the present troubles ? when they and their fathers house are those that trouble our Israel. Which brings us to a second Aggravation of this Sin :

2. The mischievous Effects of it ; for 1. as S. Paul tells us, 2 Tim. 3. 1. when men are lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, disobedient to parents, unthankful, &c, then perillous times shall come. Nothing doth more portend the displeasure of God against a Nation, than when he permits popular clamours and tumults to invade the publick authority, and the contumacy of those that break the laws, to outbrave the courage of those that should execute them.

2. St. Paul tells us of another effect, Phil. 2. 14. where he joyns murmurings and disputings. Such men are ever more ready to censure and controll than to obey the laws of their Superiors. They are starting of scruples and queries not so much to satisfie themselves, being resolved never to be satisfied, as to distract others : And as Pliny observes of the Scorpion, that he doth (*meditari vulnera*) dart forth his sting on every motion of his body, lest any occasion of doing mischief should be omitted ; *Et si non aliqua nocuisset mortuus esset* : In all companies, upon every occasion some men shew their discontent by sowre looks and sullen behaviours, their envious grudgings and vindictive groans. Their Fasting when they should feast, and rejoicing when they should mourn, Condemning the Laws which they should obey, do manifest.

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nifest that the spirit by which they live and breath is a spirit of Contradiction. "The rude people (*says the Royal Martyr in his ch. of Tumults*) are taught first to "Petition, then to Protest, then to Dictate, then to "Command. This was the method used in 43, as it is left on record in the Preface to the Covenant. — "After "other means of Supplications, Remonstrances, Pro- "testations, &c. Now at last we enter into a Solemn "League and Covenant. And by this method the late Tumults in *Scotland* commenced into a Rebellion. They sow the Seeds of Sedition in private meetings, thence issue Petitions, Remonstrances, and at last the Conventiclers appear in armed companies and declare for the Covenant against the Oath of Supremacy, and the Kings usurped power in Ecclesiastical affairs, and condemn the observation of the 29<sup>th</sup> of *May* as Superstitious. And too many in *England* were on Tiptoe to have danced after this Scotch Pipe. And so we come,

3. To the *last* effect of these murmurings, which *Moses* hath observed, *numb. 17.10.* where he expressly calls them *Rebels*. And we all know that murmurings were those winds which blew up and scattered those coals of jealousie which kept the whole Nation in a flame twenty years together, and now threaten a new Conflagration. For as the Learned *Verulam* observes, there is only this difference between seditious murmurings and seditious tumults, that the one is the Brother and the other the Sister; Tumults and Seditions are more masculine, but Murmuring as malicious. Which the Ancients have ingeniously described in the Fable of the Giants which the earth brought forth, who for warring against the gods were smitten with Thunderbolts, and to revenge their death, the Earth laboured again, and brought forth Fame. The Moral is this: The Common people are that Earth

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Earth who opposing their Governours were subdued by force of Arms ; but to be avenged of them they brought forth Fame, (i.e.) Seditious reports and slanders, which had such secret motions and subtle evasions that the gods themselves (i.e.) their Governors could not silence them. Which is the third thing proposed, the subtle pretences by which this lust insinuates it self, *what is the cause, &c.*

As if they had said : The present times are much degenerated from the former, and are still growing worse. Atheism is increased and Godliness discouraged, vile persons are exalted and such as are truly honourable despised, and there are few or none that are valiant for the truth, or shew their zeal for the Lord of Hosts. In former times men were more active for Reformation of abuses both in Church and State, there wanted not some that would tell King *David* his faults to his face, and accuse him for a man of bloud ; and if he seemed not to hear the Curses of *Shimei*, there was a *sheba* to blow a Trumpet and proclaim, *Every man to his tents, O Israel.* Nay there was <sup>1 Kings</sup> <sub>12. 16.</sub> an *Achitophel* whose Counsel was esteemed as an Oracle of God, that prevailed with *Absalom* to undertake to re-<sup>2 Sam. 16.</sup> dress the Grievances of the people, and these made their party strong enough to drive the King out of all his strong holds, and chase him not only from one mountain to another, but from one Kingdom to another, and at last to bind the King himself in chains, and his Nobles in fetters of Iron. And this honour had those ancient Saints.

And as for Church Reformation we have the Examples of those Godly zealots that publickly protested against those Superstitious vanities and heathenish customs which *David* would have joyned to the Worship of God, such as his bowing and dancing before the Ark, his appointing several Orders of Priests and Levites with

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Vocal

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*1 Kings  
12.18.*

Vocal and Instrumental musick for the Service of the Temple, who were to praise God with the Psaltery and Harp, and *to stand every morning and evening to praise God, for his mercy endureth for ever*, 1 Chron. 23. 30. And as for the costly ornaments, the vessels of Gold and Silver, the Painted and Carved works, there were those that brake them down with Axes and Hammers, and took to themselves the Houses of God in possession, yea they propagated a more simple and purer Worship, such as that of *Jeroboam* who brought their household-gods to their doors, and set up Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, making Priests of the meanest of the people, who were contented with the free-will Offerings of their Brethren.

*2 Kings 95.6.*

*Eccles 5.2*

But now though this liberty of Conscience be denied us, and King *Solomon* hath established by a Law all that *David* intended; though he have built and beautified the Temple, and obligeth us to that publick place of Worship, and enjoyns us to Worship and fall down and kneel as if God were there present: Though he requires an Uniformity to all those Forms of Prayer and Thanksgiving which were composed by *David* and *Asaph*, 2 Chron. 29. 30. and to joyn with the Levites which were the Singers, being arayed in white linnen, having Cymbals, Psalteries and Harps, to make one sound in Praising and Thanking the Lord, 2 Chron. 5. 12. Yea though *Solomon* do stint the Spirit of prayer in Gods Ministers, and forbids them to be rash with their mouths, and to let their tongues be hasty to utter any thing before the Lord, as if our extemporary prayers were the Sacrifices of fools: yet may we not complain or so much as Petition against these grievous impositions. Nay what is yet worse, we are required to renounce the Vow at *Hebron*, and the Solemn League which *Jeroboam* and his godly party took with hands lifted up to heaven, and instead of the Vow

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to God, we are told we must keep the Kings command and that *in regard of the oath of God, ch. 8. 2.* And we must also declare that *against the King there is no rising up,* upon any pretence whatsoever, nor against such as are commissioned by him; but *if the spirit of subordinate Rulers rise up against us, we may not go out of our places,* nor stir beyond our private callings and capacities, but *fear God and the King, and not meddle with them that are given to change,* though it be for a thorow Reformation. And in a word, *Solomon* would put such a gag in our mouths that we may not so much as demand, *What is the cause that the former days were better than these?*

But I have saved these men the labour in summing up all the Causes of the pretended evils of their times; and how frivolous they are, appears evidently by this, that *David appointed nothing for the publick Worship of God but what he graciously accepted.* And all that *Solomon* enjoyned was immediately directed by the Spirit of God, and stands recorded in the Holy Scriptures as general rules to be observed in the publick Worship of God to all succeeding ages.

*Solomon* well knew that the evils in his days were caused by the Complaints of those malicious men who were enemies to his Fathers Government as well as his own, that they intended to bring his Person and Government into contempt, and minded not the redress of publick grievances as much as of their private fortunes: and if the times were evil, they took a direct course to make them worse, by endeavouring to overthrow all those Constitutions which both *Solomon* and his father *David* had well established. He knew that if these Malecontents were permitted to sow these seeds of Rebellion, they would like the Dragons teeth sowed by *Cadmus*

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spring up into Armed men that would destroy their Brethren.

God forbid that we should be insensible of our own sins, or of the tokens of Gods wrath that are upon us. That our Religion should be as *Sion* of old whom no man cared for, or that we should suffer our selves to be led into Captivity as we were brought out of it, as men in a dream. It is our Interest as well as our duty to mourn for other mens sins as well as our own, but we should do that in secret, and take heed that under a pretence of reprobating their sins we do not pour out reproach on their persons and government, and by such art so spread abroad their infirmities as to make a cloak for our own iniquities. We may also be instrumental in a reformation, but we should begin it at the right end, our own wicked hearts and lives, and not at the Heads of our Superiors; to complain that the days are evil, with a design by such complaints to make them worse; to search after remote and secret causes, and overlook those that are so near and obvious in our own bosoms, and with the Harlot in *Solomon* having overlayed her own child, to accuse a tender mother, and seek to deprive her of her living child, is a subtle design, but such as could not stand the Test of *Solomon*; and a greater than *Solomon* will judge such men.

*1 Kings*  
3. 20.

It was observed by the Royal Martyr, that whoever intended to bring forth confusion in a Church or State, have used the Midwifry of complaints and tumults. By this Artifice *Absalom* stole the hearts of the people from his Father *David*, *See thy cause is right, but there is no man deputed of the King to do thee justice,* 2 Sam. 13. 3. when the design was, *O that I were judge in Israel.* And to facilitate his design he remembreth his Vow at *Hebron*, that under pretence of Piety to God he might strength-

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strengthen his party and the more impunely cast off his obedience to his Father. By the like art *Jeroboam* had stolen the hearts of *Solomon's Subjects*, and made a great part of *Israel* to sin with him. For though the foundations of *Solomons Government* were such as might have made all *Israel* as firm as Mount *Sion* which could not be moved, though in his days there was a confluence of all those blessings whereof one or two might have made another Nation happy; yet by their whining murmurings and restless complaints of heavy yocks, and approaching Idolatry, of the horrid sins and imminent dangers of the Nation, they did (*tantum non*) fail but a little of subverting the whole frame of the best established Government in the world.

But *Solomon* had a jealous ear which heard all these things, and was assisted with more than humane prudence and power to suppress them. He crusheth this Cockatrice in the Egg, and discovers the folly and impiety of it. *Thou dost not inquire wisely, &c.* which brings us to the last part of the Text, *non ex sapientia*. Witty men there might be among such (*ingeniosi in malum publicum*) but they were neither wise nor good men in the sense of *Solomon*. For whether by wisdom we understand moral prudence, or (as most Expositors) true piety and the fear of God, they who thus causlessly murmured against the King had neither, they acted both against Reason and Religion.

First against *Reason*. For what is more irrational than solicitously to enquire after the causes of those things that are not? They might as well ask why the Sun had lost its light, or the foundations of the earth were removed, which were as true as that the former days were better than those of *Solomon*; which will appear by a short view of the Church and State of *Israel* in the days of *Solomon*. For 1. *In riches and wisdom*

*Solomon*

## A Sermon preached

Solomon exceeded all the Kings of the earth that were before him, 1 Kings 10. 27. The Vessels and Utensils of Gods House as well as the Kings were of beaten Gold, for Gold was as common as silver, and silver as the stones in the streets of Jerusalem, 1 Kings 9. 28. And his Royal Navy commanded the Trade of the world, and kept his Exchequer always full and running over, bringing home 666 Talents of Gold at a time, besides the rich merchandize from Tyre and Egypt. There was also a general peace to injoy this great plenty, for Solomon was in this a Type of Christ, there was neither adversary nor evil occurrence, 1 Kings 4. but all Judah and Israel which made a prey of each other in the days of David, were united and dwelt safely every man under his own Vine, and under his own fig-tree from Dan to Beersheba, there was a general and perpetual peace all the dayes of Solomon, ver. 25. Which peace was the more admirable because that though Adonijah had usurped the Kingdom and strengthned himself by the heads of divers factions, Joab among the souldiers, and Abiathar among the Priests, and Shimei chief of the Benjamites; yet was he setled on his Fathers Throne without shedding of bloud or any opposition. His League also with Hiram deserves a remark, being a friend to the True Religion, and the most potent and skilful in Sea-affairs. But what is especially to be noted is, that all these blessings were confirmed to him by a promise from God for his father Davids sake.

1 Kings  
11. 12.

2. His clemency did adorn his peace, for he pardoned such offenders as could obtain pardon from themselves: Adonijah that had usurped the Kingdom, and Joab that had barbarously slain Abner and Amasa Captains of his Fathers Host, and Abiathar a revolted Priest that had strengthned the hands of the Usurper, and Shimei also who

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who having got the upper ground of *David* spit his venom in his Royal face, reviling him (*maledictione fortis*) with all the virulence he could, 2 Sam. 16. 7.

Yet 3. His clemency was seasoned with justice which was inflicted on incorrigible offenders without respect of persons, high and low, natives and strangers, particularly on *Shimei* for that horrid fact on the person of his father whom he commanded to be slain by the hand of *Benaiah*, and the kingdom was thereby established in the hand of *Solomon*.

4. His Maximes of Government were of infallible and eternal verity, such as these: *Mercy and truth preserve the King, and by righteousness shall his throne be established.* Pro. 20:28. *It is the honour of a King to search out a matter.* Pro. 25:2. *In the multitude of Counsellors there is peace:* 11. 14. *But where no counsel is, the people fall.* *Righteousness exalteth a Nation,* but sin is a reproach to any people, Pro. 14. 34.

And his men were suited to his Maxims, men of gravity and experience, of prudence, piety and moderation, such as would have secured the Crown to *Rehoboam*, had he not rejected them and inclined to greener heads that were brought up with him. All these blessings he dispensed with great wisdom, having a heart as capacious as the sand on the Sea-shore. Which wisdom he acquired partly by giving his heart to it, but it was perfected by the gift of God. This made his face to shine so as he attracted the admiration of all the Kings of the Earth, and the Queen of the South came from far to be an Ear witness of it, and envied the happiness of his Subjects. This wisdom he demonstrated to be better than strength by suppressing strife and contention in the first rise of it. He carefully observed all the motions of the people, and neglected not in times of peace to make provision for war. He had many fortified Cities, and

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40000 stalls for the horses of his Chariots, and 40000 horse, and his people were as the sand as for number. Notwithstanding all this preparation of Chariots and horses *Solomon* knew that Salvation was of the Lord. And that he might obtain the Lord of hosts to fight for him, he established the publick Worship of God throughout all his Dominions. This made the Crown on *Solomon's* head more splendid than that wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his Espousals. How could he strengthen himself more than by making the building of Gods house the foundation of his own? Now whereas the Ark of God in the days of *David* was in a wandring condition, sometime drawn with Oxen and sometime with Kine, *Solomon* built it a house, and directed the use of that house to be a house of *Prayer*, which God so graciously accepted that he promised, *2 Chron. 7. 14, 15.* That *his eyes should be open and his ears attent unto the prayers that were made in that place.* How irrational was it then for any to complain that the former days were better than these? A King thus settled on his Throne might scatter away all evil with his eye, and turn their low murmurings into loud Acclamations: but what shall we say? the warm Sun breeds these Vipers and animates them as well as the fire of Contention. These murmurings abounded not only in the wilderness, but in *Canaan*, a land that flowed with milk and honey, which they turned to gall and bitterness by their discontent; *they despised that holy land.* Yea this sin prevailed against our first Parents in Paradise, and tempted them by forbidden means to aspire to greater happiness and more knowledge than God thought fit for them, and thereby turned Paradise it self into a Wilderness. Yea this restless lust mounted up into heaven, and made some of the Angels of God Apostates and Devils. And no wonder

wonder then that it possesseth those who only by a flash of zeal transform themselves into Angels of light, and makes them act as incarnate Devils. It was a greater wonder how *Solomon* could shake off these Vipers that so fastned on his hands, and charmed them so as they could not hurt him. For no sooner was *Solomon* removed but they spit their venome in the face of *Rehoboam* his Son, though for three years together he walked in the ways of *David* and *Solomon*; but *Jeroboam* in the head of a Covenanted party upbraids the Son with the tyranny of his Father, *1 Kings 12. 4.* *Thy father made our yoke grievous,* and would impose conditions on him, *make thou our yoke lighter and we will serve thee,* otherwise they were ready to serve him as they served his father *David*; for because he did not presently gratifie them, they second their bold remonstrance with open defiance, *v. 16.* *What portion have we in David, &c.* And why in *David?* but to shew that they hated him the more for his sake for whom God loved him, even his father *David.*

2. Such complaints are irrational because by them men create troubles to themselves and others. Their indiscreet fears and precipitate actions betray them to those dangers they seek to avoid, as children in a boat which they fancy ready to sink, on one side, fly all to the other and overturn it on themselves, *Ταξιστει τοις ανθρωποις* & *τα περιγυματα, αλλα των περιγυματων δογματα,* it is not so much the things we fear or suffer as our false opinions of them, whereby we torment our selves before our time, yea too many vex and disquiet themselves for those things for which they should rather rejoice and be thankful. Thus was *Cain* troubled that his brothers sacrifice was better accepted. And *Josephs* brethren repined at his ferment. We call evil good and good evil; and as children cry and grudge, if we be denied those things which would prove our ruine.

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It is our duty therefore to rectifie our opinions concerning the true worth and usefulness of things according to the word of God and right reason and think that best which God sees to be fittest for us; and when he gives us bread, not to turn it into gravel and stones by our discontent.

3. It is irrational, because by a causless reflection on former, or jealousie of future times, we deprive ourselves of present blessings, and catching at shadows lose the substance. Therefore Solomon often commends a chearful enjoyment of the fruit of our labours, and the portion God hath given us, *Eccles. 9. 7.* Eat thy bread with chearfulness, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy works. And our Saviour forbids us to be solicitous for what is to come, as Solomon doth for what is past, *Matth. 6. 34.* And the Apostle adviseth us to be content with such things as we have, and so doth the Philosopher, *αστάσεοθαλαπαγώνα* to accommode our selves to our present condition, and if our estates will not stretch to our minds, to stoop our minds to our estates. *Dona praesentis cape latens horæ,*  
*linque futura.*

4. It is irrational; because if our condition be bad, this is a certain mean to make it worse. It is like the casting out Devils by Beelzebub, a conjuring up such evil spirits as we have not power to confine or put down again. When men grow weary of the long continued mercies of God, and loath Manna, it is just with God while the meat is yet in our mouths, to pour his wrath upon our heads, and teach us to know the worth of his blessings by the want of them. God hath exemplarily punished unthankful murmurers with extraordinary judgements, that all may hear and fear and do no more so wickedly. The murmuring Israelites that brought up an

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evil report upon the land, dyed by the plague before the Lord, Numb. 14. 37. Others of them perished by the destroyer, 1 Cor. 10. 10. And those in Numb. 11. 18. who having Manna enough to eat, murmured and wept in the ears of the Lord, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt. The Lord gave them flesh to eat till it came forth at their nostrils, v. 20. because they despised the Lord that was among them, and wept before him saying, Why came we out of Egypt? And for the punishment of Corah, and such as murmured against Moses and Aaron, the Lord created a new judgment, for the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up. And that people were not purged from that sin till they were utterly destroyed, as it was threatened, Deut. 28. 47,48. Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and gladness of heart for the abundance of all things: therefore thou shalt serve thy enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things, and he shall put a yoke of iron on thy neck until he have destroyed thee.

5. It is irrational, because they complain first and most who have least reason. Many a good man who in Davids days had suffered the loss of all, and came off only with their lives and some marks of their Loyalty in their bodies and estates, were abundantly satisfied to see the King returned in Peace, and the Ark of God settled in the beauty of holiness, could say with Mephiboseth, Let them take all for as much as my Lord the King is come to his house in peace, and were found faithful and peaceable in the Land. They were the murmurers who as Ziba, Sauls servant, had made themselves great with the spoils of the Crown and Church lands, but were made to refund a part of it. Though they still enjoyed not only the publick blessings of peace and plenty, and a

<sup>2 Sam. 19:</sup>  
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rich trade, and were received not only to mercy but into favour, and did partake of the Wealthy and Honourable Offices of the Nation, equally, if not beyond those that had better deserved them, did yet think themselves not duly rewarded, (as in truth they were not) and on all occasions reproached the footsteps of Gods anointed, and did not only turn their backs on the Ordinances of the King, but lift up their heels against the Ordinances of God also.

6. It is unreasonable to murmur and repine at those things in others which they practised and allowed in themselves. They complained that *Solomon* chastised them with Rods, when they wounded him with Scorpions. They accused him for endeavouring to rule by an Arbitrary power, though he governed himself according to the known Laws of God and the Nation, and often relaxed the severity and suspended the execution of them, while they lived in a bold contempt and violation of them all. Great cries were raised against the Oath of God, and the King, and against Uniformity to the Temple Worship; when they thought they were all ingaged by *Feroboams* Covenant, to bring all within the Kings Dominions to an Uniformity according to his Directory for Worship. A Toleration was thought intolerable, when *Feroboam* had set up his Calves, and he himself burnt Incense and made Priests of the lowest of the people, lest the Kingdom should return to the house of *David* (for the true worship of God would reduce them to obedience to their lawful King.) But under the Temple service a Toleration is pleaded for as necessary for the ease and liberty of the people, and if it be denied, they complain of Tyranny and Persecution, when by this means *Feroboam* and a few dissenters under him deluded the people, and making them believe that he and

*1 Kings*

*12. 26.*

*2 Kings*

*12. 28.*

and his Calves were the Gods that brought them out of Egypt, led them directly thither, and betrayed them to that abominable Idolatry. So that in truth the Indulgence which was granted them did produce more mischief than all the punishments inflicted by Solomon, which they causlessly called persecution. *Wherefore thou art inexcusable O man whoever thou art that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thy self, seeing thou dost the same ( or worse ) things : And ( though thou escape the judgment of man, yet ) think not that thou shalt escape the judgment of God, Rom. 2. 1, & 3.*

7. What is more unreasonable than for men to take occasion to grow more troublesome from those things which should quiet them, as discontented spirits are wont to do ? Let favour be shewed to the wicked, and he is the more bold and presumptuous. They turn the grace of God and the King too into wantonness. Every indulgence ( as to foward children ) makes them more pettih and insolent, every concession and yielding is used as a step for them to ascend higher and presi forward until they get uppermost. The craving humor increaseth by being fed, and with Solomons horse-leech thy cry Give, Give, though they have swallowed so much that they are ready to burst. Never was any thing in the world so well established, but there were some envious men that found fault with it.

Lastly, It is irrational, because it is an incurable evil. It is *opprobrium medicorum*, such a plague of the heart as the best State Physicians have not been able to cure. It will not admit a plaster or a medicine to be applied to it. This evil spirit though it be not dumb, yet is it so deaf, that it will not hear the voice of any Charmer though he charm never so wisely. Neither the mercies nor judgments of God, nor the meekness nor miracles of Moses could.

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could convince the murmuring *Israelites*. And when some of them saw *Corah* and his company swallowed up of the earth, yet as if there had been a transmigration of their Souls into their Survivors, the next morning they murmur again, saying, Ye have slain the people of the Lord. The worst sort of Spirits that we read of, might be cast out by Prayer and Fasting; but this kind can fast and pray, and seemingly reform and sweep and garnish the house, and then admit seven worse than it self, and at the end is worse than in the beginning. The Scripture compares this murmuring and rebellious spirit to the sin of Witchcraft which is seldom reclaimed to a pious or sober temper, for like men in a Consumption they seem pleased with the disease, and as *Jonah* they think they do well to be angry with God himself, which is the next particular, it is not only irrational but *irreligious*.

First, because these men make lies their refuge, and seek to hide their sin under false pretences; for it were easie to prove, that no times before *Solomon* were so prosperous as his. Though *David* his Father was a man after Gods own heart, yet neither he nor the Ark of God could find a resting place. It was yet worse in the days of *Saul*, between whom and the house of *David* there was continual war; and before that in the days of *Samuel* when God himself was their King, we find that they rejected not *Samuel* only, but God himself. And in the times of *Anarchy* when there was no King in *Israel*, there was no peace to him that went out, or to him that came in, but every man did what seemed good in his own eyes. Before this how long did God bear with the murmuring *Israelites*, not in the wilderness only under *Moses* the meekest man upon Earth, and *Aaron* the Saint of the Lord, but in *Canaan* against God him-

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himself. And from the beginning *Cain* slew *Abel*, and so it will be to the end of the world. So that it was a false pretence that the former days were better than *Solomons*.

2. It was irreligious, because Religion teacheth us with all thankfulness to acknowledge the blessings of God and to say with *Jacob*, I am less than the least of all thy mercies, and not to undervalue them, and expostulate with God why am I thus? and what is the cause? as if the Almighty had not rewarded us according to our deserts, or ought to do nothing but what our reason approves of. They ought to have considered how happy they might have been under such a King, the Son of such a Father, upon whom God had set such Signatures of his own wisdom, Clemency and justice, whom God made his *Jedidiah* from his birth, and appeared more than once or twice in many wonderful deliverances of him against the Conspiracies of *Feroboam*, the discontents of *Joab*, *Abiathar* and *Shimei* who went to *Gath* to confer with fugitives and imbroil the kingdom again. If we read of *Solomons* faults we read of his repentance also, this Book of *Eccles.* being a record of his Penitentials. So that indeed the greatest cause of Evil in his later days was the libertinism of some who like sons of *Belial* would indure no yoak nor were satisfied till they had got an Indulgence, and were more unsatisfied after they had it. How much better had it been for them while the true Religion and publick peace were in safety, to have been humble and thankful to God and the King, to reform their own iniquities and to mourn in secret for the Vanities of the Court?

3. If *Solomons* days had been as bad as the sins of these men deserved, yet were it a point of piety to submit to the mighty hand of God and bear his indignation. This

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was Solomons prescript approved by God himself, 2 Chron. 6. 24, &c. If the people flee before their enemies, if there be famine or pestilence. What is to be done? surely not as they did in the Prophet, Jer. 8. 20. who did fret themselves and curse God and the King, and look upward, as if they would be revenged on all that were above them, but every man should search out the plague of his own heart and repent, and make his supplication in Gods house saying, I have sinned and done perversly, and committed iniquity, and then God promised to hear their prayers, to forgive their sins and heal their land. Thus did King David in his distress, he saw the hand of God in it, and opened not his mouth because it was the Lords doing; and with this God quieted the men of Judah and Benjamin in the case of Jeroboam: This thing is from me. And though they did not think so of King Solomon, yet they ought to think that God was wise enough to dispose of all things for the good of his Church and people.

*Pj. 9. 39.*

*1 Kings  
12. 24.*

God and his Vicegerents have their *Arcana imperii* not to be rashly censured or curiously inquired into. We should do our duty and leave the conduct of publick affairs to God whose Providence over-rules all, and it is much better that things should be as God would have them than as we would, for he acts all towards wise and gracious ends, to which though humane actions like the lower Spheres have a contrary tendency of their own, yet the first mover makes them all tend to his decrees who brings order out of Confusion, and all whose ways are mercy and truth to them that keep his Covenant. *Non est judicandum de operibus Dei ante quintum actum,* we are short-sighted and cannot see to the end of Gods works which are begun in secret, & sometime carried on by contrary means, by weak and divers agents, but he knows how to bring light out of darkness and harmony out of discord,

cord, and all his providences shall end in Holiness and beauty too. This is that which Solomon observed, *Eccles. 3. 11.* *God hath made every thing beautiful in its season,* when it comes to its perfection. Some may think there is no necessity of Thunder and Lightning, Storms and Tempests, Frosts and Cold, yet these contribute to the cleansing of the Air, the health of our bodies and the fruitfulness of the year, as much as calm and Sun-shine days. In checker-work the variety of black and white adds to the beauty ; and some works of Providence like the *China* vessels, are wrought and perfected in the bowels of the earth and require an age for their Perfecti-  
on, but then they come forth so transparent that every one that considers them may say, *This is the Lords doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*

4. It is irreligious, as being the ready way to destroy Religion, and if that be ruined, we may write *Ichabod* on all things else. And this is not more easily destroyed than by our murmurings and contentions about it ; this Dove cannot fall but by a dart feathered from her own wing. The little Foxes within that undermine the Hedge of Discipline, make way for the wild Boar to break in and root up our pleasant Vines. 'Tis our crumbling into little factions under pretence of Religion, that exposeth us to the enemies of it. If the dangers we fear could but make us unite, our Union would make us safe against all the attempts of our common adversaries.

5. It is a tempting and provoking of God in a high degree to complain of those evils, whose causes and remedies are in our own power. But while we complain of them with our lips, we draw them down with both our hands. This is to do as the *Jews* who cryed out *Venient Romani,* while they were Crucifying the Prince of Peace, and so made way for those *Roman* Armies that brought a perpetual desolation on them. If we only

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make an out-cry against Popery, and instead of making up the breaches still enlarge them by quarrelling with such as are more ready and skilful to do it than our selves, that *Roman* Eagle may make a prey of us all. But if, as God hath founded us upon a rock, and compassed us about with his Salvation as with Walls and Bulworks, we would be as *Jerusalem*, a people at unity among our selves; if as St. *Paul* adviseth, we would do our duties to God and the King without murmurings and disputings, those proud Waves that oppose themselves would be dasht in pieces as hitherto they have been, and neither the gates of *Rome* nor of Hell prevail against us.

Lastly, It is irreligious, because it destroys the whole Analogy of Christian Faith, it reflects on Gods Providence, as if he wanted Wisdom or Goodness to Govern the world, and sets their mouths against Heaven, as that proud *Alfoncus* who said of the Creation, that if he had been present he could have disposed of things in a better method. It undermines the foundation of all Government in Church and State and Families, if Inferiors should be allowed to question the Commands and Actions of their Superiors; it makes those Christian graces of meekness, patience and obedience, which are enjoyned towards evil Governours, impossible. It robs the Soul of that tranquillity and peace which it might have by resigning it self to God in well-doing. The spirit of grace and peace will not enter into a discontented spirit. *God was not in the earthquake or the whirlwind, but in the still voice,* in the sedate and chearful Soul. And therefore *Moses* calls the murmuring *Israelites*, sinners against their own Souls. (*i. e.* against their peace and comforts of their life.) The Serpent will devour the Dove, and these meager thoughts, like *Pharaohs* lean kine, eat up better thoughts and affections. To a murmuring Soul wisdom will not enter. And in a word, it would

*1 Kings*  
19. 11.  
*Numb.*  
26. 38.

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would make the Christian Religion to stink among the heathen: and therefore thou dost not wisely to inquire after such things.

I have now finished my Discourse on the Text, and if my hearers will but apply the things spoken of Solomons Kingdom to our own, as every ordinary capacity may do, there needs no other Application. I shall end therefore as I begun, *Ne dicas, Say not thou a confederacy to them that say a confederacy to thee, be not allured by their promises, nor affrighted by their threats, for their feet are swift to shed bloud, destruction and misery are in their ways, the way of peace they have not known, and there is no fear of God before their eyes.* Learn we of the men of Isachar in Davids days, who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do. Fear God and Honour the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change: but leave the Administration of publick affairs, and the care of Succession of Crowns and Kingdoms to God and our Superiors, who are more concerned in them and will provide better for them than we can do. Let us set bounds to our Passions by Reason, to our Fears and jealousies by Religion, to our Errors by Truth, to our Schism by Charity and an unanimous consent in the Worship of God, and to our Murmuring by a cheerful improvement of the blessings we enjoy: that the voice of the Turtle may be heard in our Land, even Praises to our God for the wonderful mercies of This day, and for the continuance of them, Prayers for our King in the words of Solomons Subjects, *1 Kings 8.66. The Lord make the name of Solomon better than the name of David, and his Throne greater than the throne of David; and they went to their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that God had done for Solomon his servant, and for Israel his people,* Amen.

1 Chron.  
12. 32.  
Penes vos  
est rerum  
Arbitrium;  
nobis re-  
lata est ob-  
sequii  
Gloria.

THE END.